

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 14-20 are pending in this application.

Claims 14-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakai (U.S. 2001/0026435) in view of Murai et al. (U.S. 6,285,116) and Alcoe (U.S. 7,087,846). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of Claims 14-20.

Claim 14 recites:

A manufacturing method for a laminated ceramic electronic component, comprising the steps of:

screen printing a coil conductor pattern having a first land at one end of the coil conductor pattern and a second land at the other end of the coil conductor pattern on the surface of a ceramic sheet having a hole for a via hole formed therein by using a conductive material such that the first land covers the hole for via hole;

simultaneously filling the conductive material in the hole for the via hole during the step of screen printing the coil conductor pattern; and

laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets such that the first land in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate; wherein

an area of the via hole is less than an area of the first land and an area of the second land; and

the area of the second land is greater than the area of the first land.

The Examiner alleged that Sakai teaches all of the features recited in Applicant's Claim 14, except for the features of (1) simultaneously filling the conductive material in the hole during the step of screen printing the coil conductor pattern; and (2) the area of the second land is larger than the area of the first land. The Examiner further alleged that Murai et al. teaches the feature of simultaneously filling the conductive material in the hole during the step of screen printing the coil conductor pattern, and that Alcoe teaches the feature of the area of the second land is larger than the area of the first area. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

The Examiner alleged that Sakai et al. teaches a step of "screen printing (screen printing [0021]) a coil conductor pattern (line conductor 26, fig. 2) having a first land (29,

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fig. 1, left end of 26, fig. 2) at one end of the coil conductor pattern and a second land (29, right end of 26, fig. 2) at the other end of the coil conductor pattern.” However, contrary to the Examiner’s allegations, Sakai fails to teach or suggest any coil conductor patterns whatsoever, and the line conductor 26 of Sakai certainly cannot be fairly construed as the coil conductor pattern recited in Applicant’s Claim 14 because the line conductors 26 of Sakai neither have a coil shape nor are elements of a coil-shaped conductor. In fact, the line conductors 26 of Sakai are specifically disclosed as being wiring conductors and, as such, there would have been absolutely no reason whatsoever to configure or modify the line conductors 26 of Sakai so as to have a coil shape or be elements of a coil-shaped conductor because the line conductors of Sakai et al. are not intended to provide an inductance.

The Examiner is reminded that obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching, suggestion, or incentive supporting the combination. In re Geiger, 815 F.2d 686, 2 USPQ 1276, 1278 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

Thus, contrary to the Examiner’s allegations, Sakai clearly fails to teach or suggest the step of “screen printing a coil conductor pattern having a first land at one end of the coil conductor pattern and a second land at the other end of the coil conductor pattern on the surface of a ceramic sheet having a hole for a via hole formed therein by using a conductive material such that the first land covers the hole for via hole” as recited in Applicant’s Claim 14.

In addition, in the Response to Arguments section on page 2 and 3 of the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner stated:

Applicant argues that Alcoe does not teach “laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets such that the first land in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate” in claim 14.

Since the main reference of Sakai disclose[s] laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets (the ceramic sheets are laminated together [0017]) such that the first land in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land in another of the plurality of

ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets (the connecting land is positioned at an end of the line conductor, i.e., the end of the line conductor is connected to the via-hole conductor [0037], fig. 2) to obtain a laminate (the ceramic green sheets are laminated together [0017]), Alcoe does not need to teach the same limitation.

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's allegations.

Contrary to the Examiner's allegations, Sakai clearly fails to teach or suggest the features of "laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets such that **the first land in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land** in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate," wherein "**the area of the second land is greater than the area of the first land**" (emphasis added) as recited in Applicant's Claim 14.

It appears that the Examiner has ignored that fact that Applicant's Claim 14 requires both of the features of (1) "laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets such that the first land in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate," **and** (2) "the area of the second land is greater than the area of the first land."

The Examiner acknowledged that Sakai fails to teach or suggest the feature of "the area of the second land is greater than the area of the first land" as recited in Applicant's Claim 14, and instead, merely teaches that all of the lands 29 have the same area. Thus, at best, Sakai may arguably teach the features of laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets such that the first land in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate, wherein the area of the second land **is the same as** the area of the first land, and most certainly cannot possibly teach or suggest the feature of "laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets such that **the first land in one of the plurality**

of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate,” wherein “the area of the second land is greater than the area of the first land” (emphasis added) as recited in Applicant’s Claim 14.

The Examiner acknowledged that Murai et al. fails to teach or suggest the feature of “the area of the second land is greater than the area of the first land” as recited in Applicant’s Claim 14. Thus, Sakai and Murai et al. clearly fail to teach or suggest the features of “laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets such that the first land in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate,” wherein “the area of the second land is greater than the area of the first land” as recited in Applicant’s Claim 14.

The Examiner alleged that Alcoe teaches the feature of a conductor pattern 15 that includes a first land 29 and a second land 25 at opposed ends of the conductor pattern 15, wherein the area of the second land 25 is greater than the area of the first land 29. However, as shown in Figs. 1A and 2A of Alcoe, the first land 29 of the conductor pattern 15 is directly and electrically connected by the via hole 19 to the first land of the conductor pattern 15. That is, at best, Alcoe teaches the feature of laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets such that **the first land 29 of the conductor pattern 15 having an area smaller than an area of the second land 25** in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to **the first land 29 of the conductor pattern 15 having an area smaller than an area of the second land 25** in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole 19 formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate.

Alcoe fails to teach or suggest that the first land 29 on one of the ceramic layers could or should be directly and electrically connected to the second land 25, which has an area greater than that of the first land 29, on another one of the ceramic layers through the via hole 19, or that there would have been any reason or incentive

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whatsoever to arrange the first and second lands 29 and 25 such that the first land 29 on one of the ceramic layers is directly and electrically connected to the second land 25 on another one of the ceramic layers through the via hole 19. Instead, in each embodiment of Alcoe that allegedly includes a first land and a second land that has an area greater than that of the first land, the first land in one ceramic layer is always directly and electrically connected to the first land in another ceramic layer, and is never directly connected to the second land.

Thus, Alcoe clearly fails to teach or suggest the features of “laminating a plurality of ceramic sheets such that the first land in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate,” wherein “the area of the second land is greater than the area of the first land” as recited in Applicant’s Claim 14.

The Examiner is reminded that prior art rejections must be based on evidence. Graham v. John Deere Co., 383 U.S. 117 (1966). The Examiner is hereby requested to cite a reference in support of his position that it was well known at the time of Applicant’s invention to laminate a plurality of ceramic sheets such that the first land in one of the plurality of ceramic sheets is directly and electrically connected to the second land in another of the plurality of ceramic sheets through the via hole formed in the one of the plurality of ceramic sheets to obtain a laminate, wherein the area of the second land is greater than the area of the first land as recited in Applicant’s Claim 14.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Sakai, Murai et al., and Alcoe, applied alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the unique combination and arrangement of features recited in Applicant’s Claim 14.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakai in view of Alcoe.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 14 is allowable. Claims 15-20 depend upon Claim 14, and are therefore allowable for at least

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the reasons that Claim 14 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

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